

REPORT NO 832/97

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE AUGUST 1997

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

RURAL CHALLENGE FUND AWARD

RURAL RIGHTS OUTREACH WORK PROJECT

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the Scottish Office Rural Challenge Fund grant award for the Angus Rural Rights Outreach Work Initiative.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:-

- (i) notes the contents of this report which outlines details of the award of Rural Challenge funding for an Angus Rural Rights Outreach Work initiative;

and

- (ii) instructs the Director of Social Work to take forward this initiative in consultation with the voluntary and private sector partners.

2. INTRODUCTION

Angus Council has been awarded £50,000 from the Scottish Office Rural Challenge Fund. The grant is for a Rural Rights Outreach Work project and the award is spread over 3 years.

The overall aims of the initiative are to decrease the isolation of those living in rural Angus and to improve their living standards and quality of life by ensuring that voluntary organisations can provide accurate and up to date information on rights based issues and specific legislation.

The initiative will provide a pro-active training and information outreach service to the voluntary sector, offering a specialist rights based approach to the problems of poverty and debt. This will enable organisations and groups to provide an efficient and effective response to the problems of those living in isolated rural areas who have difficulty in accessing existing resources.

3. ANGUS RURAL RIGHTS OUTREACH WORK

It is recognised that poverty and disadvantage are prevalent in rural Angus and the shortage of advice services has been well documented (Rural Forum Report 1995, Angus Poverty Profile).

The Angus Rural Rights Outreach Work project bid was initiated in response to this identified need.

Angus Council is the lead agency for the Rural Challenge Fund bid. The other partners involved directly in the bid were Brechin Activities and Initiatives Network, Angus Rural Rights Outreach Work and Ferguson and Will (Solicitors, Estate Agents and Notaries) of Brechin.

The project remit is to employ a worker with specialist knowledge and expertise to work with the voluntary sector. The worker will provide a high quality training and information service to the voluntary sector based on their expressed need and covering areas such as income maximising, housing issues, and debt. Legislation conveying new rights to vulnerable individuals such as the Disability Discrimination Act, Carers Recognition and Services Act, Children (Scotland) Act and the Direct Payments Act will be specifically targeted.

The worker will be based within the Social Work Department, Welfare Rights Team and managed by the Welfare Rights Manager. The partners involved in the project will form a management committee which will meet regularly to review the progress of the project and to determine and set targets for future direction. An annual report will be produced.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Rural Challenge Fund Grant of £50,000 covers 50% of the total cost of the project. Brechin Activities and Initiatives Network is contributing £2,000 and Ferguson & Will the equivalent of £1,044. The Social Work Department will meet the remaining costs by providing resources in kind.

5. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Law & Administration and The Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

6. CONCLUSION

By employing a worker with specialist knowledge and expertise to work with the voluntary sector this project aims to take a pragmatic approach to a very detailed and complex problem.

This project will complement existing advice services in Angus and will provide a targeted approach to the development of a framework where the importance of high quality rights advice and information is given priority thereby ensuring that the knowledge base within the voluntary sector is upgraded.

This project is consistent with the Council's decentralization principles and embodies the key themes of the Social Work Department particularly in relation to developing partnerships and promoting equal opportunities and reducing inequalities in Angus.

TF/TSEB

W B Robertson
Director of Social Work

Note: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

